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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-5004

October 11, 2005

MICHAEL ENZI
WYOMING

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The Honorable Gale Norton
Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Gale:

Thank you for your work on behalf of our nation and on behalf of my constituents in Wyoming. Over the past five years, it has truly been a pleasure working with you to move a positive agenda for this nation forward.

Currently, as you may know, a number of members of the United States Senate have joined together in a working group to modernize and improve the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Although I strongly support the goal recovering species that are near extinction, the ESA has been remarkably ineffective in making this happen. As you know, of the roughly 1,300 species that have been listed, approximately 10 have been recovered.

Two animals have met their recovery levels in Wyoming, and the delisting effort should move forward. Those animals are the Canadian gray wolf and the grizzly bear.

An estimated 600 grizzly bears currently exist in the Greater Yellowstone Area (GYA), up from only 200 in the 1970s. Clearly, enough bears exist in the GYA to sustain the population with proper management. The states carefully crafted proper management plans, and now, it is time to make delisting the grizzly bear a reality.

I have been told many times that we will move forward with grizzly bear delisting, and I am disappointed that this effort has not moved forward. Today, I seek written assurance from you that the process will move forward this fall and that a final decision to delist the grizzly bear will occur in early 2006. If this time line is not achievable, please provide me with reasons that such is not the case.

At the same time the grizzly bear delisting moves forward in a timely manner, management of the Canadian gray wolf in the GYA and beyond must also change. Since reintroduction in January 1995, the wolf population in the states of Wyoming, Idaho and Montana has thrived. The three states are currently home to more than 900 wolves.

As a member of the Wyoming State Legislature, you may know that I opposed the reintroduction of the wolf. I continue to believe it was a mistake for the Department of the Interior to force this creature on the people of Wyoming. As predicted, the wolves have decimated our wildlife

population and have harmed our ranchers. Compensation programs have proven ineffective and the state has spent valuable resources working to address the problem to no avail.

Something must change. A number of proposed rule changes and proposed delisting petitions sit before you. I urge you to give them full and fair consideration and to move this issue forward in a timely, responsive manner.

Once again, I look forward to working with you on this and many other issues, and I look forward to your immediate response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael B. Enzi". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Michael B. Enzi
United States Senator

